

Daniel and the Judgment

by William H. Shea

While other persons present may have had different ideas about the purpose of the Glacier View Conference, the central issue at stake there, to me, was whether or not the past teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that an investigative judgment began in heaven in 1844 was soundly based in Scripture. I have answered this question in the affirmative, and Desmond Ford has answered it in the negative.¹ In May of this year, Dr. Richard Hammill, the chairman of the small advisory committee that met with Ford three times before the conference at Glacier View, invited me to prepare papers for presentation there. What follows is a digest of a few important points from my material on Old Testament sanctuary-judgment theology, Antiochus Epiphanes and applications of the year-day principle. For readers interested in more details, copies of my full manuscript are available through the Biblical Research Institute.

Although Ford does not directly address the issue of Old Testament parallels for the investigative judgment, it is important since Seventh-day Adventists have previously held rather narrow views on this subject (i.e., that the investigative judgment that began in heaven in 1844 is utterly unique and represents the only time that God has ever carried out such a judgment). It is unique in its cosmic scope, but it is not unique in its basic nature, as a number of passages in the judgment literature of the Old Testament demon-

strate. There is a natural logic behind such statements. God has judged in times past. God resides in His sanctuary. Therefore, the place where God has judged and from which He has issued His judgments is His sanctuary, whether earthly or heavenly.

The general proposition can reasonably be applied to all of the judgments in the Bible. That connection is made more definite and direct, however, in the particular passages in which such a connection is explicitly stated. The Pentateuch refers to at least eight such instances in connection with the tabernacle in the wilderness (Lev. 10, Num. 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20 and 27). The person or persons involved in such cases came to the door of the tabernacle and presented their cases before the Lord there. The Lord then gave His judgment in those cases, unfavorable in five and favorable in three, and those judgments were then carried out by persons in the camp or by God himself.

Later references in the Old Testament to this type of divine activity come from the prophets and psalms. Some of these instances involved only what we have called "executive" judgments, but others included a work of investigation into the cases of those involved. In some instances, these judgments were connected with the heavenly temple (Psalms 11, 14, 29, 53, 76, 102, 130; 1 Kings 22 and Micah 1). In other instances, they were connected with the earthly temple (Psalms 9, 50, 60, 73, 99; Isa. 6, 18; Amos 1, Mal. 3, Joel 2-3 and Eze. 1-10). An example of the carrying out of such a judgment in the heavenly sanctuary is the case in which the prophet Micaiah ben Imlah was shown and heard the deliberations of the heavenly court

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in the case of the wicked king Ahab (1 Kings 22). Recent Old Testament scholarship has emphasized the role of the prophet as one who receives his message from God, residing in the heavenly court.

Among the cases of judgment connected with the earthly temple, the one described in Ezekiel 1-10 comes closest in character to that which Adventists have posited for the judgment that began in heaven in 1844. The essential point of the vision of Ezekiel 1, which commentators have missed by getting bogged down in its details, is that God is in motion; He is going somewhere. That somewhere is identified in Ezekiel 10, where the departure of God from His temple in Jerusalem is described in the same terms as those in which His journey there is described in Ezekiel 1. The two visions refer to divine activity extending in different directions. God is described as traveling to His temple in Ezekiel 1 and leaving it, for the last time before its destruction, in Ezekiel 10. The dates at the beginnings of the accounts of these two visions indicate they were given 14 months apart and the second of them was given just two years and four months before Nebuchadnezzar began his siege of the city. The visions were a last warning message to Judah and were given in terms of a special work that God was to perform in His temple.

Ezekiel 9 reveals the nature of this special work since it describes how a distinction was to be made among God's people just before His final departure from His temple. The righteous who were to be saved from the soon-coming destruction through exile were to be marked, whereas the unrighteous who were not to be saved were not to be marked. Decisions concerning individual cases became manifest at the end of the period of God's special work in His temple. Those decisions appear to follow as a direct consequence of God's special work identified as investigative judgment. This judgment brought an end to the era of the Israelite monarchy. Just so, the judgment that began in heaven in 1844 will also bring an end to an era, the present era of human history. The judgment in Israel's temple exemplifies in microcosm what is to occur on the mac-

rocasmic scale with the heavenly investigative judgment.

Many modern scholars identify the actions attributed to the little horn of Daniel 8 as prophetic symbols of the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes. While Desmond Ford allows for later reapplications of the basic principle of this prophecy, he accepts the interpretation which sees the primary and most detailed fulfillment of Daniel 8:8-13 in the second century B.C., in Antiochus' time.²

Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.) was the eighth in the line of Seleucid or Hellenistic kings who ruled Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine after the breakup of Alexander's empire. He is well known from the apocryphal books of 1 and 2 Maccabees for his attacks upon the Jews, his suspension of the Jewish rites in the temple in Jerusalem and his defilement of the temple and its precincts through the celebration of pagan rites and sacrifices there. The temple was liberated from Antiochus' forces in December of 165 B.C., and the celebration of Hanukkah was instituted by the Jews to commemorate that event.

The reason the interpretation of the little horn in Daniel 8 as Antiochus is important to Adventists in that according to verse 14, it is in the context of the work of that little horn that the cleansing or restoration of the sanctuary takes place at the end of the 2,300 days. Ford holds with modern critical scholarship that the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 should refer to its ceremonial cleansing in December of 165 B.C., and not to anything like a cleansing of a heavenly sanctuary many centuries after Antiochus' time in 1844 A.D. On the other hand, if one sees the primary and detailed application of the activity of the little horn in Daniel 8 as referring to a work carried out over the centuries by pagan and then Christian Rome, as Adventist interpreters have in the past, then it is logical to find the activity referred to in Daniel 8:14 as occurring at some point far down in the stream of time, such as 1844 A.D.

From this evident contrast, the question is which of these two primary and detailed applications of the little horn in Daniel 8 is

correct? Is it the earlier Antiochus or the later Rome? The interested reader who wishes to study this subject in more detail may compare the treatment of it in chapter two of my manuscript with Ford's treatment of it in the third chapter of his manuscript.

Here we can only touch on one final point about the relationship between Antiochus Epiphanes and the little horn of Daniel 8, and that involves the relationship of Daniel 8 and

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9 with Daniel 11. Ford maintains that Daniel 11 provides the “clincher” in his argument to identify the little horn as Antiochus.³ However, he does not really argue this point, but simply quotes five pages of transcript from the 1919 Bible Conference in support of his view.⁴

From this transcript, it is evident that H. C. Lacey held that view in 1919, but that does not necessarily make it any more correct than Ford's espousal of it in 1980. The matter must be argued on the basis of the biblical text and historical correlations with the biblical prophecies. When this is done, I would suggest that what is actually clinched is the point of view opposite from Ford's, that Antiochus cannot possibly be the little horn of Daniel 8.

Ford has emphasized repeatedly that Daniel 11 is an explanation of Daniel 8. With this, I wholeheartedly agree. Ford has also emphasized repeatedly that Daniel 11:31 refers to precisely the same work that the little horn was to do according to Daniel 8:11-13. With this, I also wholeheartedly agree. The problem arises when one compares Daniel 11:22 with the preceding prophecies in the book. Daniel 11:22 refers to a historical entity that was to break “the prince of the covenant.” In contrast to the Hebrew word *šar*, which is the common word for “prince” elsewhere in Daniel, 11:22 uses the Hebrew word *nāḡîd* to refer to this particular prince.

This word for “prince” appears in only one other passage in Daniel, the prophecy of 9:24-27. In 9:26 the destruction of Jerusalem is attributed to “the people of the prince (*nāḡîd*) who is to come.” Adventist commentators have commonly applied this prophetic phrase to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. While I differ in some details as to the way in which that application is made in terms of the phraseology of this verse, I agree that this historical application is the correct one. Ford holds to the same interpretation of it.⁵

Daniel 9:27 also says that “he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week.” Regardless of whether one identifies the antecedent of “he” in this phrase as the Messianic *nāḡîd* of verse 25, the interpretation I prefer, or as a Roman *nāḡîd* from verse 26, we still have a *nāḡîd* here who makes a covenant. In terms of either historical application, this also occurred in the first century A.D. Thus, the same two terms found in Daniel 11:22 are linked together here in Daniel 9:26-27, and these are the only two places in the book where they are found linked together. Daniel 9:25-27 and Daniel 11:2 are the places where the word *nāḡîd* occurs referring to “the prince of the covenant.” Therefore, there is a direct and unequivocal equation between these two passages. Daniel 9:26-27 and Daniel 11:22 refer to the same person, whose action is connected with the covenant. Therefore, they must refer to the same time in history.

Both Ford and I apply Daniel 9:26-27 to events that occurred in the first century A.D., and he has specifically rejected the interpretation which applies these verses to the second century B.C.⁶ But Daniel 11:22 occurs nine verses before Daniel 11:31, which describes the actions of the little horn in terms essentially equivalent to the terms used for it in Daniel 8:11-13. Thus, the correlation of Daniel 9:26-27 with Daniel 11:22 and the correlation of Daniel 8:11-13 with Daniel 11:31 indicate that the little horn of Daniel 8:11-13 could only have come on the historical scene of action after the first century A.D. In this way, Daniel 11 provides the “clincher” that demonstrates that the little horn of Daniel 8 cannot be Antiochus Epiphanes.

The reason why Ford's work leads to this

problem is that he has attempted to follow two different schools of prophetic interpretation in these different prophecies. He has followed the preterist — “it-all-happened-back-then” — school of interpretation on chapters 8 and 11, and the historicist — “it-has-happened-through-the-course-of-history” — school in chapter 9. Adventists have previously accepted the historicist approach and rejected the preterist interpretation. Ford has attempted to reconcile these differences through the use of his apotelesmatic principle (see below), but recourse to this theory has not resolved mutually contradictory interpretations, as in this instance.

Adventist interpreters of Daniel and Revelation have previously held that the references to time which occur in their prophecies are symbolic and should be interpreted according to the rule of a day for a year. Ford holds that these time periods should be interpreted literally.⁷ As Ford himself has pointed out in his earlier works,⁸ there are a number of good biblical reasons why the time periods in apocalyptic prophecies should be interpreted according to the year-day principle. I will restrict myself here to but one example of its use since that example comes directly from Daniel and since it relates to the time period which is most disputed here, the 2,300 days of Daniel 8.

In considering this time period, it is important to notice the specific phraseology of the question it was given to answer, “For how long is the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, . . .”, etc. (Daniel 8:13). The word for vision carries the most important chronological implications in this question. The question is how long will the vision last, not how long will any of the individual conditions seen in that vision last. The distinction is made clear from a comparison with Daniel 12:11, which refers to two of the same conditions referred to here and gives their duration as 1,290 days. Thus, the 1,290 days, during which these particular conditions were to obtain, comprised only a part of the whole period of 2,300 days which spanned the vision.

The question then is, what is the antecedent of the word vision in Daniel 8:13? The most logical answer is that which the prophet saw up to the time this question was asked, or the prophet’s view of what is described in the preceding 11 verses of Daniel 8. There is only one vision here, not two. Thus, the time period for the vision in the question of Daniel 8:13 should begin with the Persian ram with which the vision of chapter 8 began. The 2,300 days should start, therefore, some time during the Persian period.⁹

Ford has emphasized that Daniel 11 explains Daniel 8. This position is quite sound and can be seen by comparing the contents of chapters 8 and 11. The prophecy of Daniel 8 is given in terms of symbols, whereas the prophecy of Daniel 11 provides a narrative description of naturally recognizable political actions of individual kings, and they cover the same periods of history. The Persian ram and the Greek goat and its horns in chapter 8 are described in chapter 11 in terms of the actions of the successive rulers of

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which the kingdoms depicted by those symbols were composed.

The same point can be made about the time elements in these two prophecies. In three passages of Daniel 11, the actions of Hellenistic kings of the third and second centuries B.C. are referred to as occurring over periods of “years” (vv. 6, 8 and 13). In chapter 8, we have symbolic time referred to in connection with symbolic figures, the 2,300 days of verse 14, while in chapter 11 we have normal time periods of “years” referred to in connection with the description of natural actions of recognizable kings. Since these time elements span the same historical period, a comparison of the two chapters indicates the years of chapter 11 should be utilized in interpreting the days of chapter 8. The book of Daniel itself provides us with the year-day

principle, and it is most directly connected there with the prophecy of the 2,300 days.

As a natural consequence of his rejection of the year-day principle, Ford has now also come to reject all of the historical dates that he formerly applied to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation in common with other Adventist interpreters.¹⁰ Ford's across-the-board rejection of all historicochronological applications of all time elements in apocalyptic prophecies continues throughout the book of Revelation.¹¹ This dramatic reversal in interpretation has occurred in a period of less than two years since Ford's book on Daniel was published. When Elder Parmenter questioned Ford on this point from the floor of that conference, Ford replied that he stood by 98 percent of what he had written in *Daniel*. Elder Parmenter objected that the difference between *Daniel* and the present manuscript was considerably greater than two percent. I agree that Ford's figure represents a gross underestimation of the differences involved. If there is just a two percent difference between these two works, it surely is a critical two percent which has shifted Ford from one school of prophetic interpretation into another.

Two historical dates have been selected here to represent the kind of problems one runs into in examining Ford's reasons for denying their prophetic application. In his discussion of the 70 weeks of Daniel 9, Ford stated, "... the date of 457 B.C. for the seventh year of Artaxerxes [is] still a matter of considerable dispute, . . ."¹² The date of the seventh year of Artaxerxes I is not a matter of considerable dispute. It has been fixed through four lines of chronological evidence: 1) Ptolemy's Canon, 2) the complete list of regnal years for the Persian kings in the Neo-Babylonian contract tablets, 3) double-dates from the fifth century Aramaic papyri from Egypt, and 4) data from classical historians. From these sources, the seventh year of Artaxerxes can be fixed securely as extending from Nisan in the spring of 458 B.C. to Adar in the spring of 457 B.C., according to the Julian calendar. I know of no modern chronographer of the ancient Near East who disputes this well-established datum.

What Ford has confused here is the question of whether the Jews followed this Persian-Babylonian reckoning or applied their own fall-to-fall calendar to Artaxerxes' regnal years. Since the dates in Nehemiah 1:1 and 2:1 can only be harmonized by Nehemiah's application of a fall-to-fall calendar to the twentieth year of the same king, there is direct contemporary biblical evidence that this was the custom of the Jews at that time. Thus, they dated Artaxerxes' seventh year from Tishri in the fall of 458 B.C. to Elul in the fall of 457 B.C., and this is the year from which Adventist interpreters have correctly reckoned the beginning of the 70 weeks and the 2,300 days.

Ford does not feel that he has found sufficient biblical evidence with which to support the doctrine of an investigative judgment that began in heaven in 1844. That poses the problem of explaining the historical origin and reason for existence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, since it developed out of an understanding of this prophetic teaching. Ford has attempted to solve this problem by the use of what he calls the apotelesmatic principle: "It seems to this writer that the apotelesmatic principle is the very key we need to authenticate our denominational appropriation of Daniel 8:14 to our own time and work."¹³ He has defined the apotelesmatic principle as affirming "... that a prophecy fulfilled or fulfilled in part, or unfulfilled at the appointed time, may have a later or recurring, or consummated fulfillment."¹⁴

The idea that a prophecy may have more than one fulfillment is not new among either Adventist or non-Adventist interpreters. What is new is the wholesale use to which Ford has put this idea. Daniel 8:14 is a classical case in point. According to Ford, it fits,

... not only the victory over the typical Antichrist, Antiochus in 165 B.C., but the great redemption of the cross, and its final application in the last judgment. . . . It applies also to every revival of true religion where the elements of the kingdom of God, mirrored in the sanctuary by the stone tablets and the mercy seat, are proclaimed afresh, as at 1844.¹⁵

Beyond that, it also refers to "the establishment of the new temple — first, the Christian Church; secondly, the new earth with its New Jerusalem as the throne of God and the everlasting temple."¹⁶

Thus, the fulfillment of this prophecy has been generalized to such an extent that it can mean almost anything good in the history of Israel, in the history of the church, and whatever happens for all eternity after the Second Coming of Christ. The one thing it cannot mean and to which Ford never applies the apotelesmatic principle in Daniel 8:14 is a judgment that began in heaven in 1844. Ford has spent ten pages of his recent manuscript

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criticizing pioneer and current Adventist interpretations of this verse because they do not — in his view — answer the problem posed by the context of Daniel 8:9-13. The question may reasonably be asked here whether Ford's extreme generalization of Daniel 8:14 fits the discrete historical context of Daniel 8:10-13 any better than those interpretations which he has criticized.

Ford holds that all of the positive points from all of the schools of prophetic interpretation should be accepted through the apotelesmatic principle. His justification for this, and thus the philosophical basis for the apotelesmatic principle, is his oft-repeated maxim that interpreters are "right in what they affirm, and wrong in what they deny."¹⁸ No further justification for this basic premise of the apotelesmatic principle has been advanced, and its mere assertion is not, of course, proof of its correctness. What this statement really says is that there are no such things as two mutually exclusive assertions when those assertions are cast as positive propositions. What this leads to is the nonfalsifiability of positive propositions and the nonverifiability of negative propositions. In contrast to his treatment of Mark 13 in his dissertation, where he never applied the

apotelesmatic principle, Ford's *Daniel* indicates that he holds that the principle should be applied to Daniel, but only in selected portions. Thus, Ford rejects several dates traditionally associated with the time prophecies of Daniel, when, according to the apotelesmatic principle, they should have all been accepted.

In the Glacier View manuscript, Ford has cited E. G. White in support of his application of the apotelesmatic principle to the prophecies of Daniel. As far as I can determine, none of the passages cited support such an application. The apotelesmatic connection of Daniel 8:13 with Matthew 24:15 is Ford's, not Ellen White's.¹⁹ *Patriarchs and Prophets* (p. 358) is talking about Leviticus 16, not Daniel 8:14 or 12:2.²⁰ E. G. White has borrowed the phrase "to bring in everlasting righteousness" homiletically in *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 374. She is not reapplying the prophecy of Daniel 9:24 there.²¹ The recurrence of historical scenes from Daniel 11 is not the same thing as reapplying verses from its prophecy in Letter 104.²²

The ultimate irony in the controversy that Ford has raised in this way is that he offers the apotelesmatic principle to the Church as the solution to the problem he sees in Daniel 8:14. It actually is his own refusal to employ his own principle that has created this problem. This is particularly the case in two important and linked instances. In his thesis, Ford did not use what he now calls the apotelesmatic principle to interpret the prophecy of Mark 13 so that it might apply to both the generation of the apostles and our modern generation. For him, Mark 13 was intended to have occurred in the first century and the first century only. No interpretation of it, apotelesmatic or otherwise, can allow it to apply to a time beyond then.

On this basis, none of the prophecies of Daniel could have had as their primary intent, either in the mind of God or Daniel, any extension of time beyond the first century A.D. All of the time prophecies of Daniel must be shortened to meet this goal, according to Ford, and none of them could have been intended to have stretched to any time of the end after 1798 or 1844. This has led to the second problem not solved by the

apotelesmatic principle: Ford's refusal to apply it to Daniel 8:14 in such a way as to accept the pioneers' interpretation of it. Daniel 8:14 can be applied to a preaching of the gospel at any time between Daniel's time and our time, or it can be applied to the establishment of the church in the New Earth, but it cannot be applied to an investigative judgment that began in heaven in 1844.

Thus it is Ford's failure to apply his own apotelesmatic principle to Mark 13 and Daniel 8:14 that has created the very controversy which he says he has proposed it to

solve. The final question here is, who is right, the pioneers or Ford? More accurate exegesis of the biblical text suggests that the pioneers were right in their final conclusion about Daniel 8:14, but time and space do not permit an examination of that side of this controversy. For the time being, we must let this matter rest with an application of Ford's own principle to this problem. The pioneers affirmed that an investigative judgment began in heaven in 1844 on the basis of their interpretation of Daniel 8:14. Ford denies this. Interpreters are "right in what they affirm, and wrong in what they deny."²³

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. My answer is developed in "Daniel and the Judgment," the paper presented at Glacier View. It considers the applicability of the year-day principle, as well as such topics as "Why Antiochus Epiphanes is not the Little Horn of Daniel 8," and "The Judgment in Daniel 7." Desmond Ford's position is developed in his thousand-page manuscript, "Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment." For purposes of the present discussion, I have also referred to Ford's doctoral dissertation, *The Abomination of Desolation in Biblical Eschatology* (Washington, D.C.: University Press, 1979), and to his commentary, *Daniel* (Nashville: Southern Publ. Assn., 1978).

2. Ford, Glacier View manuscript, pp. 377-83.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 383; quotation marks are his.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 384-88.

5. Ford, *Daniel*, p. 232.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

7. Ford, manuscript, p. 330.

8. *Ibid.*, A 137-42; *Daniel*, pp. 300-305.

9. Ford has made the same point in his commentary on Daniel, an exegetically sound position which he now unfortunately rejects in his manuscript, pp. 346-88. In *Daniel*, p. 188, he states: "Furthermore, it should be noted carefully that the question is not merely, 'How long shall the sanctuary be trodden underfoot?' but, 'For how long is the vision that culminates in the terrible work of the little horn?' The

vision actually begins with Medo-Persia, and thus we would expect that the 2,300-day period should likewise begin in the days of that empire."

10. On pp. 292 and 323 of his Glacier View manuscript, Ford rejects the idea that the three and a half times prophecy of Daniel 7:25 began in 538 A.D. and ended in 1798. On pp. 287-88, Ford rejects the interpretation that the 2,300 days prophecy of Daniel 8:14 began in 457 B.C. and ended in 1844. On pp. 288-89, he also rejects the belief that the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 begins in 457 B.C. and applies to 408 B.C., 23 A.D., 31 A.D. and 34 A.D.

11. Ford, manuscript, pp. 292, 325-26.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 320.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 345.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 485.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 356.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 420.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 346-56.

18. Ford, dissertation, p. 74; *Daniel*, p. 68; manuscript, p. 505.

19. Ford, manuscript, pp. 484, 526.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 504.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 503.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 492.

23. Ford, dissertation, p. 74; *Daniel*, p. 68; manuscript, p. 505.